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ABSTRACT

This booklet describes a workshop dealing with various components of nonverbal communication, including environmental setting, proximity, physical appearance, and vocal manner, which influence the information conveyed to others. This workshop, designed for use with classroom teachers and school support personnel (N-12), presents activities which explore the interactions of parent-teacher conferences and teacher-student interactions in the classroom. Examples of body language are illustrated and discussed. Other sections help participants evaluate their own nonverbal behavior, and teach nonverbal communication to children. Cards are provided for the final activity, "Sorting Out Your Feelings," which may be duplicated and cut out for use by participants.
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A Presentation in the Series

Human Relations and the Schools

SAY IT WITH MORE THAN WORDS

Conditions beyond those of the verbal realm greatly influence the information which we convey. The workshop will deal with environmental setting, proximity, physical appearance, vocal manner, and other forms of nonverbal behavior.

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Facilitator Instructions

This booklet was designed for use with classroom teachers and school support personnel, K-12. It is intended to develop an awareness of the impact of nonverbal behavior on communication. Various components of nonverbal communication including environmental setting, proximity, physical appearance, and vocal manner are discussed. Suggestions as to ways to increase children's understanding of nonverbal communication are also included.

I'm Glad I'm Me

by Ruth Dana Pedersen

No one looks
The way I do.
I have noticed
That it's true;
    No one walks
    The way I walk.
    No one talks
    The way I talk.
    No one plays
    The way I play.
    No one says
    The things I say.
I am special.
I am me.
There's no one
I'd rather be
                than
                    me!

From *Ready to Roll*, Open Highways Book 1. Scott, Foresman. Reprinted from One/Two, September 3, 1972.
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Environment

I. Classroom Arrangement

II. Parent-Teacher conferences
Think about the most recent conference you held with a parent and ask yourself the following questions

1. If you are male, did you slip into your jacket before the parent arrived? Knowing that you had a conference scheduled for that day, did you choose attire different from your everyday school dress? If so, why? If you are female, did you freshen your lipstick and comb your hair before the parent's arrival? Knowing that you had a conference scheduled for that day, did you specially select the outfit you wore? If so, why?

2. Before the parent arrived, did you make an attempt to straighten your desk, to put things in place, or to make the room slightly more attractive? If so, why?

3. Before the parent entered the room, did you have some notion about where you would hold the conference-at your desk, at a table, or at a table, or at student desks?

4. At the parent's arrival, did you give him your immediate attention or did you ask him to wait while you completed a task?

5. When you settled down to talk, approximately how many feet separated the two of you? Did you at any time move closer to the parent? back off from the parent? change your position relative to the parent? touch the parent? Why?

6. During the conference was your tone of voice different from the tone of voice you tend to use with your students? at home with your family? in the teachers' room? If you answer yes, consider why you vary your tone of voice with different audiences.

7. How did the precision with which you spoke during the conference compare with your usual enunciation at home? in the teachers' room? in the principal's office?

8. How did the volume of your voice during the conference compare with your projection when you teach?

9. When you heard the parent's footsteps in the hall, did you walk toward the door to greet him? Why? Why not?

10. How did you tell the parent where to sit?

11. How did you indicate to the parent that the conference was terminating and it was time to leave?

12. In what ways did you use your body to clarify a point you were making? For example, did you use your hands to describe something? pantomime with your body to show a behavior typical of the parent's child? use your fingers to count off items in a series? use your hands to make more explicit a contrast which you were making?

13. In what ways did you use your body to focus the parent's attention on something? For example, did you gesture toward the bulletin boards? a listening-speaking station? a work area? the reading corner? Did you point to particular items in the student's record or to a paper held in your hand?

14. In what ways did you use your hands, head, or body to emphasize a point you were making verbally?

15. During the conference did you ever feel yourself smiling or nodding almost deliberately?

16. Do you recall making eye contact with the parent as you conversed?

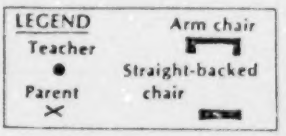
17. Do you recall receiving a nonverbal message from the parent during the conference? How did you respond?

18. Did you form any opinions about the parent based on his appearance? his tone of voice? his enunciation? the loudness with which he projected his voice? his posture? the way he made eye contact with you?

19. Did you ecer have the feeling that he was deliberately using stance, tone of voice, gestures, or pauses to create a specific impression?

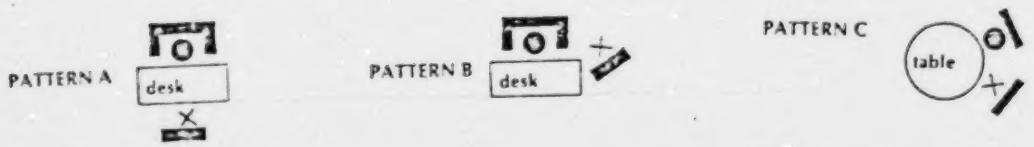
20. Did you notice any nonverbal signs indicating nervousness-fiddling with coins, tapping of fingers, jiggling of feet, or twisting of a ring? Were you exhibiting any of these types of nonverbal behavior?

Appearance



Setting

CONFERENCE PATTERNS THAT SEND DIFFERENT MESSAGES



Time

III. Active vs. Sterile Room

Proximity

"My space is my kingdom."

Territoriality

Distance

Formal

Informal

Intimate

Time

"The pause that refreshes."

Pacing

Wait Time -- ask your question and wait

Many teachers ask two to three questions per minute, and they permit only one second for a student to begin to reply before restating the question or directing it elsewhere.

After receiving an answer to a question, the teacher will ask another question or comment upon the answer before on second passes. Consequently, students are encouraged to give those answers which come to mind first, or to respond, "I don't know."

When teachers attempt to increase their wait time following both their own questions and student responses to three seconds or longer and reduce the frequency of right-wrong reactions to student responses some interesting things happen. These are:

1. The length of student responses increases.

2. The number of student-initiated responses increases.

3. Failure to respond decreases.

4. Teacher-centered talk decreases and child-to-child talk increases.

5. The amount of inferential and speculative talk increases.

6. The number of questions initiated by the students increases.

7. Contributions of "slow" students increase.

Body Language

"Language is a poor thing. You fill your lungs with wind and shake a little slit in your throat, and make mouths, and that shakes the air; and the air shakes a pair of little drums in my head...and my brain seizes your meaning in the rough. What a roundabout way and what a waste of time."...George du Maurier

Communication between human beings would be just that dull if it were all done with words; but actually words are often the smallest part of all. So it's fun for a time to put them aside and to become a part of what goes on when people meet face to face.

eyes

position of head

gestures

hands

walk

baton gestures

feet & legs

posture

handshake

Nonverbal Leakage

autonomic signals

metasignals

Intention Signals

Nonverbal Disapproval Signals

1

2

The Cheek Crease (1) and the Thumbnail Applause gesture (2)

3

4

5

6.

6

7

8

9

Symbolic insults (3–9) vary greatly from culture to culture and are often meaningless outside their home range. They include the South American Goiter sign, meaning stupidity (3), the Spanish Baby-head sign meaning immaturity (4), the Arab Little-fingers Pull-apart movement, symbolizing the end of a friendship (5), the European Long-beard gesture, meaning you are boring (6), or the Austrian version of this (7), in which the imaginary beard is stroked with the fingers. There is also the widespread and well-known yakity-yak gesture (8), where the hand mimes the speaking movements of the mouth, and the 'fed-up-to-here' gesture (9).

Leadership

Results of Survey

Dress

"Dress for Success"

Evaluating Your Own Nonverbal Behavior

Audio Tapes

Questions

Projection

Video Tapes

Talking With Hands and Fingers

Deaf people can't hear.
But one way they can "talk" to each other
is with sign language.
They move their arms, hands, and fingers
to make signs that stand for letters, words,
punctuation marks, and numbers.
They put these signs together to make
sentences and to ask questions.

GOOD MORNING

Your Face Can Say Things

Sometimes you can tell what a person's thinking
or how he's feeling just by the look on his face.

Look at the pictures across the top of these pages.
By changing the expression on the boy's face, the
artist tried to show you how the boy feels.
How do you think the boy feels?

Try this experiment yourself.
Stand in front of a mirror
and make faces—or expressions—
that mean these things:
"I feel sad."
"Boy, am I hungry."
"You wanna fight?"
"May I please, please have another piece of cake?"

Can you think of other things
that you can say with your face?

Answers: A. Amused B. Sad C. Afraid or angry
D. Excited E. Disappointed F. Surprised

Making Cartoon Faces

Here are some eyes that are—

angry . . . happy . . . sad . . . surprised.

Here are some mouths that are—

angry . . . happy . . . sad . . . surprised.

Here are some eyebrows that are—

angry . . . happy . . . sad . . . surprised.

Put them together and what do you have?

A happy face

An angry face

A surprised face

A sad face

Cartoon artists everywhere draw faces
with the same kinds of eyes, mouths, and lines
to help tell a story or to make you laugh.

You can be a cartoon artist, too.
Draw some face shapes, hair-dos, and ears.
You may even want to draw a dog face or an elephant face.
Then add the eyes, mouths, and lines in the pictures to make
your own furious face, happy face, sad face, and surprised face.

A logical place to begin study of nonverbal language is with personal gestures. Pictures of people provide an effective stimulus for discussion and for the thoughtful exchange of differences of interpretation. It is an easy task to cut pictures from magazines and ask children to interpret the message the person or people in the picture are trying to convey. Sample questions might include:

1. "What message do you think these two boys are exchanging?"

2. "Can you tell from their gestures, and their facial expressions what these boys are thinking, feeling, and expressing?"

3. "Is the girl happy about the message she is receiving? If not, can you give me some words to describe how you think she feels?"

4. "Does anything about the way the people are standing or using their bodies tell you about the message?"

IDEAS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

REFERENCE: Stewig, John Warren, "Nonverbal Communication: I See What You Say," Language Arts, vol. 56, n.s., February, 1979, pp 150-155.

With older children we might direct attention more specifically to gestures of greeting. The teacher may provide pictures which will serve as a stimulus for discussion and interpretation or may ask children to look for pictures they would like to share. In studying gestures of greeting, we want to help children learn to "read" the nonverbal signals between the people in the picture. In such a study, we will help children understand that gestures of greeting are affected by the individuals; 1)race, 2)level of intimacy, 3)prior relationships, 4)business together, and 5)the availability of physical space.

Prefessional Gesture

Another type of gesture is what we call professional gestures, those necessary in a particular occupation. Typically these are more organized, and less idiosyncratic than personal gestures.

The best known gesture system is pantomime, in which the total message must be communicated without words.

Older children could be made aware that pantomime is part of the culture of many countries. In several oriental societies, for example, systems of highly stylized gestures are part of theatre performances. In Thailand actors and actresses learn a vocabulary of gesture which has specific meaning to the audience. In the type of Japanese drama called No palys, a form perfected through several centuries to its present state, actors use gestures which are highly systematized so that they communicate commonly understood meanings.

In addition to studying about mime, encourage children in a variety of pantomime experiences. Ask them to pantomime such simple everyday tasks as picking up a fork, a mechanical action we seldom think about. If children need help in performing the mime we may use the real object and ask them to look carefully at how their fingers are placed so they can duplicate the position. Wrapping a package, putting on a coat, cutting a cake, writing on a pad of paper - these and many other pantomime tasks can be part of a sequence of learning about nonverbal communication. Later these indivudual mime tasks can be incorporated as appropriate into story sequences children enact in creative drama.

Other professional gesture systems can be studied. Less well known is the communication system used by farm workers who need to send messages great distances across fields. Saying "Raise the equipment" is easier when it is done with professional gestures. "Come forward" is another in this system of codified gestures which carry pre-established, agreed upon meaning to the farm workers who understand and use the system.[1]

Policemen use professional gestures in their job, and a study of the kinds of messages which can be sent to motorists is a useful part of a unit on gestures.

Children may be unaware that television directors use a gesture system to communicate with performers who cannot hear them on the set. While filming live shows, the performers must get information which cannot be given verbally, hence the use of professional gesture. A trip to a local television station could include seeing the videotaping of a show and talking with the director about the system of gesture being used.

Another kind of signal system is used by musicians. The composer sends messages to the conductor using a highly organized written system. Then it is the conductor's job to interpret these messages to the performers using a system of gestures. A visit to a symphony orchestra rehearsal, followed by the conductor's explanatoin of the gestures used would be a worthwhile learning experience for children. If this is not possible, the high school band or orchestra director could serve as a classroom resource person.

Other workers who must learn and use a system of gestures are referees. The signals they send must convey meaning to players, coaches, media commentators, and fans.

These ideas are only some which might be included in a nonverbal communication unit. Such a unit can be planned for children at any grade or age level. Studying these varied aspects of nonverbal communication can greatly expand children's understanding of the total range of message sending. In the process, they will be able to increase their effectiveness both as communicators and as interpreters of this important kind of communication.

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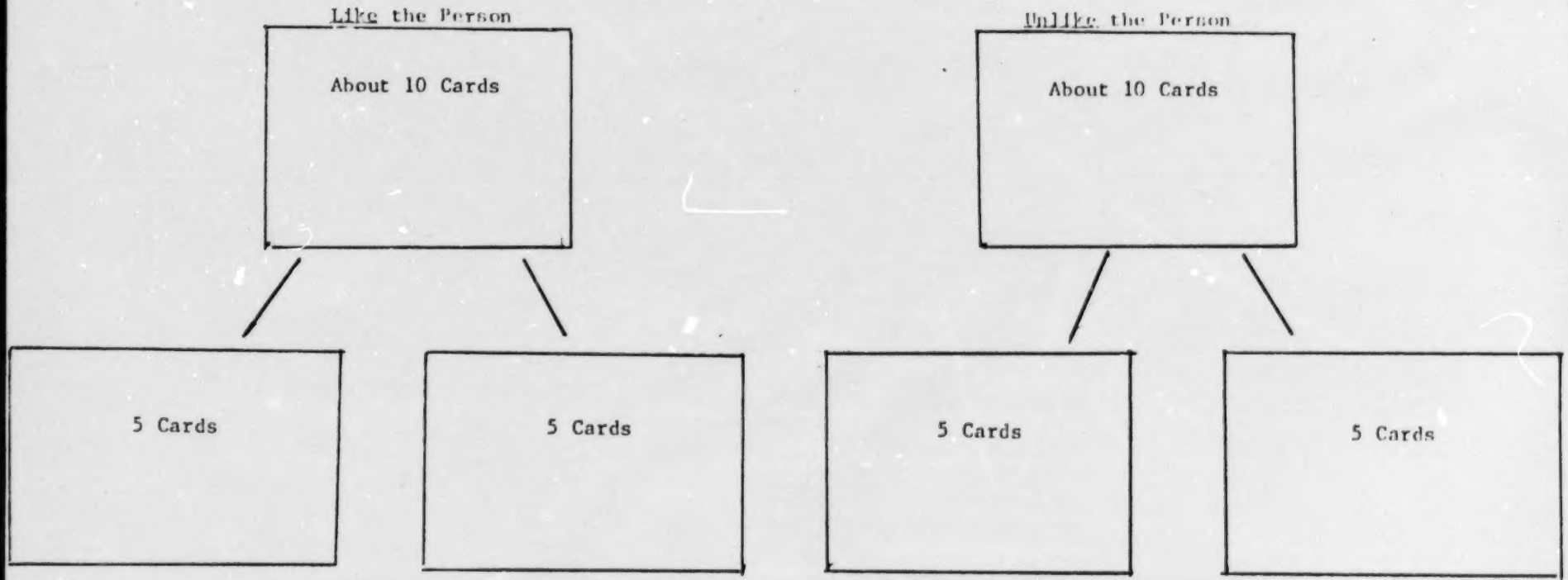
Directions:

1. Divide the cards into two approximately equal stacks, half being characteristics most like the person; half being characteristics least like the person.
2. Further divide and rearrange the cards until there are five cards in each area below.
3. Wait for further directions.



Activity: SORTING OUT YOUR FEELINGS

Purpose: Nonverbal cues often provide a "screen" through which we view others. In this exercise, you will make some evaluations of another person's characteristics based on the nonverbal information which they transmit.

Directions:

1. Remove the (20) cards from the envelope and leaf through them, noting the words which appear.

2. The activity will be repeated twice; participants will be grouped in two member teams and each person will be evaluated. In addition, each participant will sort the cards for their own self-evaluation.

Note: In the booklet an evelope was attached which contained small cards listing the following words:

AGGRESSIVE	INTENSE
CALM	LOGICAL
CAUTIOUS	MOODY
CONSERVATIVE	NERVOUS
CYNICAL	REBELLIOUS
EMOTIONAL	RICH
ENTHUSIASTIC	SECRETIVE
FRIENDLY	SENSITIVE
ILL	SHY
TIRED	SUSPICIOUS